

Appl. No. 09/218,545

Amendment dated May 27, 2004

Amendment to the Specification**New Version of the Abstract:**

An absorbent article is disclosed. The article includes an absorbent chassis and a pair of front and back panels. The absorbent chassis defines a pair of laterally opposed side edges. The opposed back panels are permanently attached to the side edges of the absorbent chassis in the back waist region of the article to provide a permanent joint. The opposed front panels are refastenably attached to the side edges of the absorbent chassis in the front waist region of the article to provide a refastenable joint. The front and back side panels are permanently connected together along a side seam to define a waist opening and a pair of leg openings in the article. In use, the article can function in a similar manner to conventional training pants when in the prefastened configuration, or it can be unfastened prior to or during use to function in a refastenable manner similar to conventional diapers.

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New Version of the Summary of the Invention:**Summary of the Invention**

In response to the difficulties and problems discussed above, new pant-like disposable absorbent articles which have an easy opening feature and methods of making the same have been discovered. In one aspect, the present invention concerns a pant-like, prefastened, refastenable, disposable absorbent article which defines a front waist region, a back waist region, a crotch region which extends between and connects the waist regions, a longitudinal direction and a lateral direction. The absorbent article includes an absorbent chassis, a pair of opposed back panels and a pair of opposed front panels. The absorbent chassis defines an exterior surface, an interior surface opposite the exterior surface, a pair of laterally opposed side edges and a pair of longitudinally opposed waist edges. The opposed back panels are permanently attached to the side edge of the absorbent chassis in the back waist region of the absorbent article. The opposed front panels are refastenably attached to the side edge of the absorbent chassis in the front waist region of the absorbent article to provide a refastenable joint. The front panel and back panel on each side edge of the absorbent chassis extend laterally outward from the absorbent chassis and are permanently connected together along a side seam to define a waist opening and a pair of leg openings and provide the pant-like, prefastened, refastenable, disposable absorbent article.

In yet another aspect, the present invention concerns a pant-like, prefastened, refastenable, disposable absorbent article which defines a front waist region, a back waist region, a crotch region which extends between and connects the waist regions, a longitudinal direction and a lateral direction. The absorbent article includes an absorbent chassis which defines an exterior surface, an interior surface opposite the exterior surface, a pair of laterally opposed side edges and a pair of longitudinally opposed waist edges. The absorbent article also includes a pair of opposed back panels which are permanently attached to the side edge of the absorbent chassis in the back waist region of the absorbent article. The absorbent article also includes a pair of opposed front panels which are refastenably attached to the side edge of the absorbent chassis in the front waist region of the absorbent article to provide a refastenable joint. The front panel and the back panel on each side edge of the absorbent chassis extend laterally outward from the absorbent chassis and are permanently connected together along a side seam to define a waist opening and a pair of leg openings and provide the pant-like, prefastened, refastenably disposable absorbent article. The absorbent article also includes a fastener located on each of the front panels which are is releasably engaged with the exterior surface of the absorbent

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chassis in the front waist region to provide the refastenably joint. The absorbent article finally includes a releasable bond located on each of the front panels which releasably bonds the front panels panel to the side edges edge of the absorbent chassis in the front waist region to assist in maintaining the pant-like, prefasted, disposable absorbent article in the prefasted condition.

In yet another aspect, the present invention concerns a pant-like, prefasted, refastenable, disposable absorbent article which defines a front waist region, a back waist region, a crotch region which extends between and connects the waist regions, an absorbent chassis which defines a pair of opposed side edges and a pair of opposed waist edges. The pant-like, disposable absorbent article is made by a process which includes:

- a) providing a continuous web of interconnected absorbent chassis;
- b) permanently attaching a pair of laterally opposed elastic back panels to the side edges of each of the absorbent chassis in the back waist region to provide a permanent joint, the back panels extending laterally outward from the side edges;
- c) refastenably attaching a pair of laterally opposed elastic front panels to the side edges of each of the absorbent chassis in the front waist region of the absorbent article to provide a refastenable joint, the front panels extending laterally outward from the side edges;
- d) selectively cutting the continuous web of interconnected absorbent chassis into discrete absorbent articles;
- e) folding each of the discrete absorbent articles about a fold line extending in a lateral direction through the crotch region of the article thereby positioning the front panels and the back panels in a facing relationship; and
- f) permanently connecting the front panels and the back panels together along a pair of laterally opposed side seams to define a waist opening and a pair of leg openings and provide the pant-like, prefasted, refastenable, disposable absorbent article.

The present invention advantageously provides pant-like, refastenable disposable absorbent articles which include an easy opening feature and methods of making the same. In particular, the present invention provides pant-like disposable absorbent articles which are capable of being reliably pulled up or down over the hips of the wearer to assist in the toilet training of the wearer similar to conventional training pants. Moreover, similar to conventional diapers, the pant-like disposable absorbent articles of

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the present invention can advantageously be applied to and removed from the wearer similar to conventional diapers after they have been soiled with relative ease and cleanliness. Further, the pant-like disposable absorbent articles of the present invention allow easy inspection by the care giver to assist in determining whether the article is soiled similar to conventional diapers.